



Chapter 106: Caught in a compromising situation.

Tess's POV:

"So what? He agreed to commit to you?" Alex asked me that night. We were spending the night together in his luxury apartment, and at that moment we were naked in his huge bathtub. I was sipping champagne and we were enjoying a bubble bath that Friday night, enjoying each other's company.

I sighed and said, "Not yet, but it's a start."

"What do you mean?" Alex asked intrigued.

I explained the whole story to him. Alex had a tense, even urgent look in his eyes.

"Then we need to get him to at least think that Hannah is out of the picture," Alex told me.

"Yes, but how are we going to do that?" I asked him.

"Have you ever heard of creating fake images with artificial intelligence?" Alex told me.

"I never heard of it. How are we going to do this?" I asked him.

"All we need is a dozen or so pictures of Hannah. You're still living in that mansion. Do you think you can get those pictures for us?" Alex asked me.

"I think so. I'd need to look around the house where they keep the pictures. Ethan has very few pictures displayed around the house. They're pretty private about their marriage," I told Alex.

"But of course! Ethan got married in love with another woman!" Alex exclaimed, and I felt a little smug. More than liking Ethan, I liked the power I had over him.

"Well, but she must have brought her belongings. They must be somewhere in that huge manor," I told him.

"Bring them to me as soon as you can, and we'll make something that makes Ethan believe that Hannah has moved on and that in that way, he should too," Alex told me.

I nodded and told him, "I'll do it as soon as possible."

"But now, let's stop talking about Ethan. After all, we're both naked in a bathtub," Alex told me with a sly smile.

"Hmmm... And what did you have in mind?" I

asked him suggestively.

Alex took the champagne flute from my hand and placed it on the edge of the tub. Then he purred, "I have a few ideas for some fun. First in here, then in bed. What do you think?"

"I think I'm ready," I told him. I had barely finished my sentence when Alex's mouth assaulted mine, while his soapy hands roamed my body.

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Later that night, I lay awake thinking about our plan and how close we were to avenging my father's death. We had managed to change old Michael's medication and he died slowly, in pain, thanks to a hired nurse who had switched his meds. Now it was the grandson's turn to pay for what he did to me when we were teenagers.

The plan didn't seem to be moving forward the way we wanted it to, but it was moving forward. The problem was the volume of resources being committed to keeping the plan running.

Patricia was a loose end who, if she opened her mouth, could bring Hannah back to town. I knew that my case against her was flimsy and was being dismantled by the ballistics tests the forensic team had run. We needed to find Patricia

as soon as possible and find a way to silence her.

Plus there was Hannah herself, who had dropped off the map. If only I had hit her and not been shot, the situation would have been very different. We were looking for her to make sure she never came back, but until now, we had no idea where this woman was. I needed Ethan's focus on me, not looking for her.

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The next day, I went back to the manor and scoured every corner I could for photos of Hannah. When I searched through the photos in the office, I easily found what I was looking for. Once I had grabbed a dozen or so and was satisfied with my search, I stuffed them in an envelope and was on my way out of the office to meet Alex when I bumped into Ethan at home.

"Oh, my God, Ethan, you scared the hell out of me!" I exclaimed.

"Sorry, Tess. I didn't mean to scare you. I thought you were back at your place by now," he told me simply.

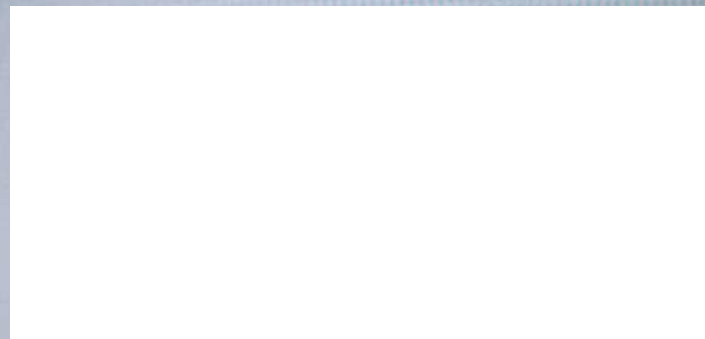
"Me? I would never! I've been here waiting for you every day since you left," I told him. Except for the nights I spent with Alex in his penthouse, like

Chapter 106: Caught in a compr...

+10 Points

yesterday. Just remembering last night had my stomach doing a complete flip. "What are you doing here?" I asked him. "Are you back home too?" I had to know what he was doing at the manor.

"I'm not so sure, Tess. You know... too many



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memories," he mumbled to me. And then, Ethan arched an eyebrow at my barrage of questions, and finally turned the questions on me: "So what were you doing in my office, Tess?" he asked curiously.

"I was looking for an envelope. I need to drop off a

Chapter 106: Caught in a compr...

letter at the post office," I held the envelope up in my hands. Thank goodness I'd already tucked the photos in there, and the envelope wasn't addressed yet, so it really looked like I needed to send a letter.

"I see," Ethan said thoughtfully. "If you want, I can take the letter with me and Eric can mail it through the company," Ethan suggested.

"It's not ready yet, but thanks for offering," I smiled, disguising my discomfort.

"You're welcome. Whenever you want, the service is at your disposal," he told me.

I nodded and said, "Okay, I'll let you know," and ran out of the house.

I can't say exactly why, but being with Ethan under the same roof made me a little nervous. I was in my car in record time and as soon as I started the car, I floored the gas immediately.

I arrived at Alex's penthouse. Everything inside of it was opulent. He didn't like to spare expenses, but I knew that deep down, he was just living on appearances and that he couldn't afford all that structure without Ethan's help.

We had arranged to meet at lunchtime at his

Chapter 106: Caught in a compr...

apartment because first, I was banned from showing up at Brown's from the moment I had chased after Ethan like a desperate puppy and it had pissed off his wife. And second, because we might look suspicious if Alex was welcoming me into the company.

When I got to the apartment, I saw that Alex wasn't alone.

"Oh, you're here. We've been waiting for you," Alex greeted me as soon as the elevator doors opened in the lobby of his apartment.

"We? Who are we?" I asked him curiously.

"This is Soren Dashwood. He works in artificial intelligence and will create our fake photos of Hannah," Alex explained, pointing to a boy in his early twenties who looked as if he'd recently gotten out of diapers.

I nodded at him and murmured, "It's a pleasure."

Soren nodded back and went back to working with God knows what was on his laptop.

"Did you bring the pictures?" Soren asked me without even looking at my face.

I retrieved the photos from my bag and handed them to Alex, as Soren was ignoring me.

Alex handed the photos to Soren, who examined them and muttered, "Yeah, that'll do for sure."

"And how long can we expect the services to be completed?" Alex asked him anxiously.

"Within twenty-four hours," Soren told him as he got up, closed his laptop, and left Alex's apartment.

"What was this?" I asked a confused Alex as soon as Soren left the apartment.

"Yeah, the kid's a little weird, but he's pretty smart. You'll see. His work is genius, and soon we'll have compromising photos of Hannah for Ethan to see," Alex told me excitedly.

"Ah, finally some good news!" I exclaimed to him.

"And Ethan will be so disappointed in Hannah that he'll run into your arms," Alex told me smiling.

"Then we can go on destroying him," I muttered

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I spent the rest of the afternoon with Alex trying on wedding dresses. As time was ticking against me, I needed to look a little more "full" when Ethan finally decided to marry me. So, instead of the tight and provocative dress that I would certainly wear to my dream wedding, I opted for a more

demure and understated version.

I was super happy when I got back to the manor, and I almost didn't notice the bouquet that was at the front door. With it was an envelope addressed to me.

I smiled smugly at that scene. I was pretty sure the flowers were coming from Ethan, who was probably apologizing and trying to win me back after spurning me. I knew deep down he still loved me!

I left the shopping bags on the first piece of furniture in the house I saw, most of them being the trousseau I had chosen. So I busied myself with looking at Ethan's card and reading what I expected to be his words of regret and passion.

As soon as I opened the envelope, however, there was nothing handwritten but a typed letter. This was very strange. All the notes Ethan had written to me up until that point were handwritten, to show his affection for me and his effort to please me. So, I started to read the note, and I sat down in amazement. Lucky for me I was next to a couch or I would have landed on the floor.

"So, you thought that you could live this double life forever? You don't know how much of your dirt I

Chapter 106: Caught in a compr...

know. One false move and Ethan will know it too," the note read.

Also inside the envelope was a flash drive. I took the device with trembling hands and inserted it into my laptop.

On the flash drive was just a folder with a video file. It had been filmed through a c***k in the door one night when Alex had slept with me. We were both stark naked losing ourselves in each other on top of Ethan's bed.

I picked up the phone immediately and called Alex.

"What happened, Tess?" Alex picked up my call on the first ring.

"Someone knows about us, Alex. We're being blackmailed," I told him hurriedly.

"What?! And what did they say? What do they want?" Alex asked me worriedly.

"I don't know yet, but I have the feeling that we'll find out soon enough," I told him and killed the call.



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